

[Essie Meadows]

September 22, 1939

Essie Meadows, (Housewife)

Catawba, N. C.

Ethel Deal, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

Essie Meadows Eva Means

Ellen Helen

K. C. Meadows J. C. Means

Lincolnton Jefferson

Newton Bakerton [??????]

Eva sat on the edge of her chair, and clutched her black worn bag nervously. She was dressed in a green flowered print and a small black felt hat.

"Its nice of you to ask me here to set down. My husband come up on business and it takes him so long to git through. Its awful waiting on a man and no where to go. I ain't acquainted much in Bakerton. We live on the farm. I take care of my Aunt Helen and can't got out much. 'Course I'll tell you all about it. My ole man won't be ready fer a while. I was born in this county. My people is farmers fer back as I have any recollection. I've had a hard time fer as working goes. I ain't never knowed nothing else but to take my hoe and go to the field. I'm forty eight and when I was a girl we went to public schools. I went fur

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as I could go, that wasn't much. I'm sorry I got no better education. If I had more I wouldn't feel so green and backward when I get out. Another thing I have two daughters. They go to High School. I want them to finish there. Sometimes I wonder if they will be ashamed of me being so ignorant.

"Now that's an idea, I never thought of trying 2 to get books from the library and improving myself. Yes, the children could help me of a night. I'd sure like to speak better English. The ole man may think its foolish at my age. The nights are long when I have to be up with Aunt Helen and maybe I could turn them into profit."

Eva looked pleased. A man in dirty overalls and a blue shirt put his head in at the door and asked if she was ready.

"No I ain't, I'm busy right now. Do you think its sinful to want things better then what you've got? My husband thinks anything like trying to get something nice is the Devil's work."

Husbands may talk like that but they're the first to recognize improvement in the wife, I stated, they'll like it too.

"We have six and a half acres of ground. Our house is right nice, but its only five rooms. We don't farm much, just raise things for our own use. We ain't got no electric lights or sewerage. J. C. owns his own pottery business. That keeps him busy and I work the patches. We don't make much but a living. He owns a truck and goes to Jefferson fer his clay. It takes him 3 a day to make the trip. One load of clay costs a dollar. Out of the load he makes three hundred and fifty gallons of pottery ware. After the pottery is shaped on a wheel, its dipped in Albany [slip?] clay. That is what makes the glaze on the pottery. We have a dry kiln to bake it in. The kiln is heated slowly and the pottery placed inside. It takes about twelve hours to bake it. After removing it from the dry kiln its it's ready for the market.

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"We make jars, dishes, crocks and many other things. Of course we sell things at home to anybody. J. C. takes a load out to Virginia often then the local market here is right good. We brung some up today to sell to the stores. I don't know exactly what he clears on a load. I'll say about twenty five dollars on three hundred and fifty gallons of pottery. There he comes again but I'm in no hurry.

"Eva are you ever going home?

"Soon as I can. I'm telling about your pottery business, come in and help me."

J. C. came in, took off his cap and sat down.

"You know as much about it as I do. I make a living at it and I like to do it. I enjoy the trips 4 I make to Virginia and other places to sell it. We're just poor folks. I couldn't afford to go places for pleasure. I'm hoping to make enough soon to buy me a car.

"I wish you could," said Eva, "so we could go to church. We live nine miles from the church where I belong and I never get to go. The children goes to Sunday School and Church close home. I don't get out much and a car would be such a pleasure. We could take Aunt Helen to ride and the children to the show.

"That's true," said J. C., "but right now we got to go home so I can get to work. The dry kiln is empty. Would you like to come out and see how its made? We'd be glad to show you how its done."

"Do come," said Essie. "I'm going to try out your idea of self improvement. They say a dog never gets too old to learn new tricks."

In a few minutes Essie was back. "I want to ask you something. Do you think I could learn about clothes and things like that as well as education? Well, good, I'll go to the library this minute and git me some books and magazines if J. C. never gets over it. And I'll be back

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to see you the very next time he comes to town. When I make up my mind to do a thing I always do it."